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REGIONS OF PEACE--OASES OF HOPE

By Arnold Simoni

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PREFACE

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Arnold Simoni is a peace researcher with over twenty years experience, including several books and pamphlets to his credit. He is an engineer and was previously president of his own electronics manufacturing company.

CONDENSÉ

Après avoir analysé la situation internationale et les difficultés soulevées par le désarmement, l'auteur de cet exposé passe en revue de nouvelles façons dont on pourrait réduire le risque de guerre en renforçant la sécurité nationale, tout en assurant des conditions favorables à la croissance économique.

La proposition dont il est ici question est axée sur la création d'associations régionales de petites et moyennes puissances qui, contrairement aux pactes traditionnels de sécurité collective, favoriseraient des conditions propices à l'instauration d'une paix viable et durable. Il s'agirait là d'une première étape en vue de la création d'un nouvel ordre mondial.

Les régions envisagées dans cet exposé sont l'Amérique centrale, l'Europe centrale et les Balkans. La proposition pourrait également être mise en oeuvre dans d'autres régions du monde.

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INTRODUCTION

Though universally sought, peaceful coexistence in a disarmed world remains a will-o'-the wisp. And while the two superpowers took an important first step in 1987 with the INF Treaty, and may take an even more significant second one by agreeing to a fifty percent reduction in strategic arms, the gains will be more psychological than real. At the same time "drastic" reductions in strategic armaments are negotiated, new, more precise and more deadly weapons systems, now in the research, development and production stages, will by far outweigh any reductions.[1] These new weapons systems will be more destructive than their predecessors, and their advances in accuracy and lethality will continue unabated. In addition, there is the continuing real danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We have to recognize that the problem we are faced with is no longer a simple East-West confrontation. There are more actors who have to come to an agreement before disarmament could become a reality.

Given this situation, new avenues must be found which could reduce the risk of war. High on the list of such new approaches should be conflict reduction in existing and potential conflict situations between secondary powers. The real danger is that such conflicts may escalate and involve the superpowers.

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[1] Solly Zuckerman, Nuclear Illusion and Reality, Collins, London, 1982. Robert S. McNamara, Blundering into Disaster, Pantheon Books, New York, 1986. New Left Review (ed.), Exterminism and Cold War, Verso, London, 1986. W. Arkin and R. Fieldhouse, Nuclear Battlefields, Ballinger, Cambridge, 1985. T. Cochran, W. Arkin, M. Hoening, US Nuclear Forces and Capabilities, Ballinger, London, 1984. SIPRI Yearbook, World Armaments and Disarmament, Taylor and Francis, London, 1983 to 1986. Frank Barnaby, The Automated Battlefield, Sidgewick & Jackson, London, 1986.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a concept of how regional security associations could not only function but would be sufficiently desirable to entice nations to join. The challenge before us now is to create a concept "to live by," one that is broad enough to be acceptable, flexible enough to allow for regional differences, yet unifying to a world that is on the verge of self destruction. The idea of a Regional Association of Nations is to provide just such a guiding concept.

General Comments

Given the undeniable decline of superpower hegemony, what will or can replace the leadership role of such once-great empires in an increasingly unstable world? The meteoric rise to power of some other nation? Or a sudden leap to "world power" status by the present United Nations? Neither alternative seems likely and neither is desirable.

Because international security problems are frequently regional in character, the next stage in world political development should be a transition to a multiplicity of "regional communities" designed to achieve regional stability. The purpose of these communities, composed perhaps of countries with different ideological, military and economic interests would be to work towards stability within their regions. Not tied to any existing alliance, they would be non-aligned with respect to the superpowers. Each region's combined military force would be strong enough to defend the region from outside attack and to ensure peace among the nations of the region. As well, it would be structured for defence only. Economically, each region would strive for increased internal trade and a strong measure of economic self-reliance. In short, each Regional Association of Nations (RAN) would be set up to unify rather than divide.

Even where there are differences in ideology and political systems, nations will find it advantageous and clearly in their own self-interest to join with their regional neighbours to work towards common goals: the improvement of their economies, enhanced military security and the reduced opportunity for external military and economic pressures to affect them adversely.

History has never been static; there have always been changes, but most of the time not changes that people and their political leaders have foreseen or desired. In our time, more than in the past, such changes will be rapid and profound. If appropriate courses of action are not carefully planned beforehand, unwise or hasty reactions in the face of chaotic and fluid conditions could lead to disaster. The time to prepare a plan of action for dealing with international conflict is now, before we are swept away suddenly by an unexpected current. At the top of the list for the formation of Regional Associations of Nations (RAN) would be Central Europe and Central America, followed by the Balkans.

WHY NOT THE UNITED NATIONS?

When final negotiations over the formation of the United Nations began in the autumn of 1945, the fundamental differences separating East and West rapidly came into the open. The only way to establish the organization was to make major compromises in the drafting of its charter. The result was the creation of a body that was not capable of fulfilling its original mandate of avoiding the "scourge of war." Although many of the agencies of the UN have proven to be immensely helpful, its peacemaking and peacekeeping capabilities were flawed from the start because no agreement between

the power blocs could be reached.[2]

One could blame the veto power of the permanent members of the Security Council which has been used, or misused, by all of them at one time or another. However, the veto is symbolic of disunity of the member states in the Security Council. Consequently, the UN cannot act effectively to implement measures against any aggressor. But even if UN member states could agree on the formation of a peace enforcement agency, who would decide who is the aggressor and who the victim? Who would decide who is the guilty party in any given conflict and who should be helped by the UN? Just as difficult is the question of how strong an international peace force should be in order to be credible and effective. We only have to remember the Iran-Iraq War or the conflicts in the Middle East to grasp this point about operational difficulties.

Nations could hardly be blamed if they did not want to join regional associations formed and directed by the UN. The fear of unacceptable decisions being made by the UN General Assembly or by the Security Council, influenced by distant political considerations, would be enough to cause hesitancy. While some UN help might be desirable, especially if combined with that of certain countries such as Canada or the Scandinavian states, unpredictable interference from outside the region would run counter to the purpose of these largely autonomous regional associations.

Thus, there are good reasons for countries to adopt voluntarily new solutions to regional conflict problems. However, national sovereignty has to be respected; agreements

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[2] For more detailed discussion on this subject see: Arnold Simoni, Beyond Repair, Collier Macmillan, Toronto, 1972.

cannot be imposed on unwilling states by either the superpowers or international organizations. They must be the result of decisions made by the states involved. Otherwise, plans, however well intended, simply will not work.

GENERAL MODEL FOR A REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NATIONS (RAN)

Peace alliances between nations are not new. They can be traced far back in history. The Regional Association of Nations proposal attempts to avoid some basic weaknesses of previous alliances and, by so doing, hopes to make such regional associations more durable, more predictable and capable of a positive influence on the formation of a new world order.

There are many good reasons to join with the other nations of one's region. The first advantage would be improved national security with less cost for each participating nation. This would flow directly from the fact that the participating nations would integrate their defence forces, at the same time assuring others that national forces could not attack each other. The cost of modern weapons is skyrocketing and their operational reliability is uncertain. To keep up with a potential adversary, a nation must constantly acquire improved weapons systems which are costly and require ever-more-sophisticated and expensive servicing.

Secondly, not only would national security be improved but the chances of simmering conflicts between smaller and middle-sized nations drawing the superpowers into an escalating conflict would be greatly diminished. The creation of a RAN would greatly improve stability and predictability and, because of that, become an important factor for helping to lay the foundation for world peace.

The third advantage would be an improved economy. Most governments have difficulty keeping up with the rising expectations of their publics and, in some regions, nations are struggling for mere survival. Thus, regional associations could enable national governments to concentrate their efforts on improving their economies and, at the same time, make them less susceptible to outside political and military pressures.

Provision for a defence-police-verification force would be essential to every RAN treaty. Obviously, the emphasis and structure would differ with the individual region. But there would be one principle which would apply to all regions: they must neither create, nor be seen to create, military vacuums. Nor must they have a real or perceived aggressive posture.

But such a defence force should not follow the model of NATO or similar defence arrangements. NATO is designed not only to defend itself, but also to retaliate and, if it is deemed necessary, to make a pre-emptive attack. The line between defence and offence is very thin. By contrast, as indicated above, RANs' efforts would only be directed to non-offensive defence. A well-prepared defensive system, equipped with a large quantity of modern anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons under the control of a well-disciplined and trained military force, would fulfill these needs.

In addition, this force would carry out a police and verification function among the nations within the regional organization, in a manner agreed on by the participating nations. Such a force would contribute increased confidence through its internal verification function. Depending on the region's political stability, a standing militia force could be an additional contributing factor for maintaining regional security at reasonable costs.

Characteristics of this defence-police-verification force can be summarized as follows:

o The force could be compared to the functioning of a national or local police force in the sense that its operations would have to remain within the legal framework established by the RAN constitution;

o It would be expected to act automatically, in accordance with criteria established in the constitution. It would not have to wait for a special mandate to perform its tasks;

o The size, armament and activities of the force would have to be well-defined;

o The personnel of the force would be recruited from the forces of all participating nations, freely intermixing personnel;

o They would wear a distinctive uniform, temporarily surrender their national status, and would swear allegiance only to the RAN defensive-police-verification force;

o The force would be located at its own strategically positioned bases, close to sensitive border regions and airports;

o Each region would establish its own defence-police-verification force;

o The structural set-up and the function of such a force would have to be anchored in the constitution of the individual RAN;

o Such a force would have to be conspicuously neutral with respect to other nations in the region as well as to outside nations;

o The force would not have the mandate to interfere in internal conflicts, but it would have the right and duty to ensure that national armaments, as agreed on beforehand, are drastically reduced and that the surplus is dismantled or removed and that no new nationally-owned weapons are installed and/or stored;

o A review board and an ombudsperson with specific legal power would be established to ensure the perception as well as the fact of fairness in the force's operation.

In addition, it is important to emphasize that:

o Changes in the constitution could only be made with the participants' unanimous consent;

o They would need to agree that nations wishing to leave the association must give at least one year's notice.

Depending on the region, close economic cooperation between the nations involved would be important. In many cases, such as that of Central America, cooperation leading to the formation of a common market would be essential.

The argument may be made that such closely integrated and comprehensive associations of nations cannot be achieved because the organization's operations would interfere with the sovereignty of the participating nations. However, the curtailment of sovereignty has become common since the end of the Second World War. This is the case today not only in the

economic sector, but even more extensively in the military sector which was previously thought to be the sector most strongly opposed to any reduction of national sovereignty. In the Second World War, for instance, the military forces of the allied governments fought under common commanders. Recently, even further reductions of national sovereignty have taken place. NATO's commanders plan the structures and decide on arsenals for the military forces of all participating nations. In addition, most of these nations accept the stationing on their territories of soldiers from other nations. Thus, the acceptance by governments and their populations of a partial curtailment of national sovereignty has become common.

From this general model of a Regional Association of Nations, let us now turn to specific examples.

RAN ADAPTED FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

Creating a regional association in Central America may seem to be an impossible task. The enormous political differences between Nicaragua and its neighbours--Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica--are well known and deeply rooted. However, recent events suggest that what these countries have in common may be stronger than what divides them. What is common is their language, their latin heritage and their poverty. And surprisingly, given the economic and military ties of some of these countries with the United States, they also have in common a resentment of American interference and a wish to arrange an accommodation with Nicaragua.[3]

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[3] A thorough analysis of Central America can be found in an article by Linda Robinson, "Peace in Central America," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 66, No. 3, 1977/1988.

The Contadora process which started in 1985 as well as the initiative of the president of Guatemala which brought the leaders of the Central American nations to the negotiation table, represent a movement in the RAN direction. Although these attempts were not successful, they were indicative of the desire of these nations to join together, and this against their immediate financial interests and profound political differences. In 1987, the President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias Sánchez, attempted again to bring the five nations together to negotiate a peace agreement and to resolve their internal conflicts.

Prior to 1987, 200,000 Central Americans were killed (of a total population of 25 million) during a decade of bitter fighting in their own countries. In addition, nations in this region had become economically dependent on support from outside powers which then imposed their political will on them.

Accusations continuously fly that some Central American governments are secretly assisting insurgents in other countries, but none of these actions are as serious as the massive support provided by the United States to the <u>contras</u>. Perhaps the US has not behaved any worse than previous colonial powers by clinging to the outmoded and intolerable concept of the Monroe Doctrine which "gave" it the right to intervene in the internal affairs of Central American countries. But the time has passed when any form of intervention in the affairs of other countries can be considered acceptable. Aside from humanitarian reasons (which have been disregarded throughout history), the imposition of political and military power by one nation on another has become increasingly counter-productive.

Central to the Arias Plan was a fixed timetable of negotiations along with disarmament by the governments and rebels in those states experiencing civil war. Even so, any agreement which may be reached under this plan will be only a first step toward a durable peace process. The military problems are only symptomatic of more fundamental problems which they have not yet begun to address. Exacerbating the wide-spread poverty are corrupt and dictatorial governments, ignoring the needs of the population as a whole and human rights in general. Thus, not only do they have to improve their national security and their economy, but they would have to establish a regime within which human rights, freedom and justice were assured for their people.

The formation of a Regional Association of Nations (RAN) including Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and perhaps Panama, would be a necessary first step for establishing a durable peace in this area and improving the standard of living of its peoples.

RAN ADAPTED FOR CENTRAL EUROPE

Obviously, the situation and problems in Central Europe are quite different from those of Central America. Contending armies face one another daily across borders prickly with barbed wire and nuclear warheads. The massive concentration of troops and all classes of weapons, deployed by the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO, foment a fear of conventional war. And even though land-based intermediate-range nuclear weapons will be eliminated as a result of the 1987 INF Treaty, tactical missiles with nuclear weapons are still on this territory and additional warheads can be launched easily from both sea and air.

Given this state of instability, even a slightly destabilizing political event in one nation of the region could precipitate military intervention, quickly drawing in the two superpowers. In any case, Germans from the East as well as the West must feel a continual concern that their countries would be the battlefield, even in the very unlikely event that the conflict could be controlled and not escalate to other countries. Not enough information is available from East Germany, but in West Germany, citizens as well as politicians, from the left to the right of the political spectrum, have become alarmed about their precarious situation and they question whether "deterrence" can save them.[4]

West Germans think that they have three options from which to choose: closer military association with France; rapprochement with the East; or joining with other nations of their region. The first, closer association with France, would be resented and feared by most other European nations as well as by many Germans, and, in the long run, would not improve military security. The second, rapprochement with the East, would be opposed by most Germans and not accepted by the rest of Europe. The third option involves forming a close alliance

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[4] Gene Sharp with Foreword by George F. Kennan, Making Europe Unconquerable, Ballinger, Massachusetts, 1985. Dietrich Fisher, Preventing Nuclear War, Rowman, New Jersey, 1984. Stephen Tiedke, Alternative Military Defence Strategies, Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1986. Alvin M. Saperstein, Depletion Zones: An Enhanced Non-Provocative Defence in Europe, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Stockholm, 1983. Derek Paul (ed.), Defending Europe, Taylor & Francis, London 1985. Sverre Lodgaard and Marek Thee, Nuclear Disarmament, Taylor & Francis, London, 1986. Dieter S. Lutz, Zur Theorie Structureller Angriffaehigkeit, IFS, Hamburg University, 1987. In addition, see: special issue on Alternative Defence, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1984; and a special issue, Alternative Defence and Security, Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1978.

with other Central European nations, attempting to become neutral and acting as a credible buffer zone between East and West. This may become an attractive option.

The central feature of such a non-aligned, politically neutral association, consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, would be its adoption of a credible and strong defensive-non-aggressive military posture. Such a non-aligned buffer zone could withstand political changes by either or both of the superpowers and the associated danger such changes might present. In addition, its economy could be geared for close cooperation among all of its participating nations. Although neither of the existing economic arrangements--Comecon and the EEC--need be abandoned in the short run, some larger economic accommodation might be negotiated for the region. In short, this association would have all the ingredients necessary to make it durable and viable, taking into account each member nation's need for security and economic growth. A review of the different proposals since the end of the Second World War will put the proposal in proper perspective.

The overall emphasis of these proposals--including those of the West German Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Karl George Pfleiderer (1952); the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko (1956); and the Polish Foreign Minister, Adam Rapacki (1957 and 1959)--has been the creation of a denuclearized Central European zone. The idea of a nuclear weapon-free zone was also proposed by the Commission on Disarmament and Security (under the chairmanship of Olof Palme) in its report published

in 1982.[5] This proposal, as well as several others, called for a nuclear demilitarized zone approximately 200 to 300 kilometres wide at the border between East and West Germany.

There are serious problems with the nuclear weapon-free zone idea. Not the least of these is the difficulty in monitoring the strict performance of any nuclear-free zone agreement. It would be impractical (and probably unacceptable to the states involved) to attempt to control the entire demilitarized zone's boundary as if it were a national frontier. The countless secondary roads running into the zone from both sides would make effective monitoring impossible. Furthermore, the commonplace presence of weapons that can deliver either conventional or nuclear warheads (tactical missiles, rocket launchers, howitzers and tactical aircraft, for example) would make verification a nightmare. And the potential for the easy transport of nuclear weapon systems to sites just outside the zone would generate further mistrust. However, most important, such nuclear weapon-free zones would pose no barrier to nuclear weapons overflying such zones. For these reasons a nuclear weapon-free zone might actually prove to be a "confidence-degrading measure." Little of the distrust generated by the above arbitrarily located neutral "zone" would develop if the zone were comprised of several countries of the region.

It must be recognized that real security can only be achieved by ensuring the perceived and actual security of all parties, East, West and neutral. The spiralling acquisition of more weapons will not improve security and peace in the region, nor is it likely that simple arms control and arms reduction agreements will be of a reliable or durable nature.

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[5] Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (US), Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982.

More comprehensive solutions are needed.

As a first step, this proposal would have the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia agree that all heavy military equipment within the four nations--including chemical and nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles--be dismantled and destroyed. In addition, the movement of these types of equipment through any of the four countries would be forbidden. The peace agreement between the RAN member states would also call for the creation and placement in this region of a combined defence-police-verification force as discussed earlier.

The advantages of this kind of arrangement for the Soviet Union, given its historical fears and concerns, are obvious. As for NATO, this proposal would lead to a relative reduction of its military strength, and some may argue that it would impair NATO's ability to deter possible aggressors. However, the remaining NATO forces in the western part of Europe, along with the available French, British and American tactical and strategic nuclear forces would constitute an adequate deterrent force.

But more importantly, this new militarily defensive region would make any attack and encroachment by the Soviet Union on Western Europe even less probable, if not impossible. At the same time, Germany's inability to acquire or manufacture weapons for aggressive purposes, would improve the confidence between the Western European states, helping to bring political stability to this region. This situation could be maintained independently of political changes that might occur in this and other countries. An additional advantage would accrue to the United States, the United Kingdom and France. In due course, reduced tensions, because

of this neutralized buffer zone in Central Europe, would cause a sharp reduction in the cost of their military obligations. This approach is the only way of creating the necessary level of security and stability in the Central European region. Arms control and arms reduction agreements alone will not be able to address the more basic sources of inherent instability in the region.

RAN IN THE BALKANS

With the loosening of control by the Soviet Union over Bulgaria and Rumania, new and interesting developments in this region are taking place. The historical meeting of the Prime Minister of Turkey, Turgut Özal with his Greek counterpart, Andreas Papandreou, in Switzerland in January 1988 and the exploratory discussions and meetings in progress to investigate the possibility of forming a close cooperation between Turkey, Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, are very promising. Even traditionally aloof Albania has asked to participate. This rapprochement is occurring despite strong differences in political and ideological orientation and the adversarial relations among several of the region's nations.

The adoption of the RAN model by the above nations could certainly bring fruitful results for all participants.

RAN IN INDOCHINA

The results of the Vietnam War were the desolation of Vietnam's land and infrastructure, and the dislocation of its population. Even now, fifteen years later, the region has not recovered. War within Kampuchea is still going on and there have been periodic clashes between China and Vietnam. Consequently, the rebuilding of Vietnam and the other nations of this region takes second place to pursuing military goals.

However, if the current attempt by Vietnam to come to some settlement with Kampuchea is coupled with a willingness to discuss the border dispute with China, there is a basis for hope.

There are encouraging negotiations in this region between the different actors. However, as long as these nations do not cooperate in a regional solution--which would enable them to reduce their military efforts and, at the same time, improve their national and regional security, as well as strengthen their economic performance -- the region's stability will continue to be very fragile. Forming a RAN, adapted to regional needs, would certainly be a major step forward.

A Regional Association of Nations in this region might include Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea and Thailand.[6] If, at the same time, these countries would cooperate economically, eventually forming a common economic market, both economic and military security could eventually replace the present chaos.

CONCLUSION

The existing world-wide trend of "improvements" in the effectiveness of weapons, and the ongoing proliferation of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, are facts of our time. Furthermore, any serious attempt to avoid war must begin by seeing war as a world-wide phenomenon, not one which can be isolated as an East-West issue. The global political-

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[6] Although Thailand belongs to the ASEAN grouping with Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia, it would be to its advantage to join an association including the nations of former French Indochina as well. There is nothing to preclude membership of a nation in two regional associations. Such cross-linking can even be an advantage.

military systems have never been static in the past and certainly are not today.

The validity of the proposal discussed in this paper should be seen in this context. The difficulties that will be faced in creating regional security organizations ought not to be underestimated. Nevertheless, in our interdependent global system, where accelerating and destabilizing changes in the economic, political and security dimensions can be foreseen, new ways to reduce the danger of conflict must be found and implemented.

The formation of Regional Associations of Nations, as proposed here, could help to produce "oases of stability" and thus reduce the risk of regional conflicts escalating to include superpower clashes. The RAN concept could be an important contributing factor that could improve the chances for maintaining peace. It would serve, in different ways, the self-interest of all nations, both those directly involved and those outside such regional associations. The RAN concept could be the first step leading towards the reduction of international tensions and the danger of open confrontation. Thus, it could become one important step in the transition to a world without war.

Canada and other middle powers could play an important role in exploring and advocating this type of regional security solution. By sponsoring the formation of neutral peace regions, Canada could exert a different kind of "force" in the world, one that would improve the chances for its own future as well as those of many other less-advantaged states.